Electric Cooperatives Are Powering Rural Broadband Expansion

Nearly two generations ago, electric cooperatives played an important role in closing the rural electricity gap. Today, electric co-ops are on a similar mission to deploy broadband to help close the digital divide. Why are electric co-ops well positioned to expand broadband?

- **Electric co-ops have an extensive history serving rural communities.** With over 80 years of experience, electric co-ops have a deep understanding of the population and geographic challenges associated with providing service in remote places.
- **Electric co-ops can leverage their existing infrastructure.** Electric co-ops can use their existing distribution networks, infrastructure assets and rights-of-way to more efficiently and economically deploy broadband services.
- **Electric co-ops understand local broadband needs.** Co-ops exist to serve their members, most of whom are community residents and businesses, and their members know firsthand the gaps in coverage.
- **Electric co-ops have strong community ties**. Electric co-ops can spur deeper conversations with their members about the value of broadband and pave the way for increased adoption and use.
- **Electric co-ops need broadband too**. Broadband allows electric co-ops to make "smart grid" updates, integrating advanced technologies that increase efficiency and reliability, more effectively use resources and better serve members.

Interested in learning more about electric cooperatives and their role in broadband expansion? Attend BroadbandUSA's Practical Broadband Conversations Webinar on electric cooperatives Wednesday, November 15 or contact us at broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov or 202-482-2048.

Broadband News and Updates

Federal News

- The President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee will hold a call on November 16 to deliberate and vote on the final draft of the *Report to the President on Internet and Communications Resilience*
- The deadline for submitting comments on NTIA and NHTSA's proposed rules for the 911 Grant Program is November 6
- The Department of Commerce awarded $30 million in support of economic diversification and workforce development in coal communities

State News

- California's Governor Brown signed the Internet for All bill into law
- Pennsylvania's research network, KINBER, increased network capacity to 100GE across its statewide backbone infrastructure
- Ohio legislators introduced new broadband legislation
- Tennessee electrical co-ops are looking to provide Internet service
- Applications for Tennessee's Broadband Accessibility Grant are due November 17
- Rural companies are connecting neighbors through New York's Broadband for All program
- Six West Virginia counties are applying for Community Development Block Grants
- North Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming will be the initial focus of Microsoft's TechSpark program

Funding Opportunities

- Google announced its *Grow with Google* initiative to help Americans with the skills they need to get a job or grow their business
- The deadline for NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association's Smart Rural Community Collaboration Challenge is December 1
- The City of Boston created a $35,000 Digital Equity Fund

Public Safety/FirstNet

- NTIA released instructions for opting-out of the first nationwide public safety network
- FirstNet and AT&T launched the first application developer program for public safety
- To date, 27 states and territories have opted in to the FirstNet network
- Announcements for states and territories that have opted to participate in the FirstNet network in October: Indiana, Alabama and Minnesota
- How NTIA Ensures Responders Can Communicate During Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Stakeholder Resources

- Several tech industry leaders released a national Internet of Things strategy report

Other News

- BroadbandUSA's Jean Rice highlighted the importance of digital skills at a panel during the Smart Cities Week conference
- Quintillion completed its installation of Alaska's subsea fiber optic cable system
- In Contentious Washington, Rural Broadband Enjoys Bipartisan Support

New Broadband Resources

- CoBank's Electric Distribution/Broadband Team recently released *Making the Move into Broadband: Rural Electric Co-ops Detail Their Experience*, a collection of interviews with industry experts and rural electric cooperatives that are expanding broadband infrastructure. The interviews discuss key challenges and best practices and serve as a guide for electric co-ops considering the move into broadband. Click here to learn more.
- The Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance recently released its *Digital Inclusion Playbook*, a report addressing digital inequity in Charlotte and recommending strategies to close the digital divide. Many of these strategies can be used by different communities across the country. Click here to learn more.
- ICMA's Research and Policy Team released a new research report on cybersecurity. The report, *Cybersecurity: Protecting Local Government Digital Resources*, is now available free online for downloading here.

BroadbandUSA Spotlight

- BroadbandUSA published *Technical Assistance Overview: Broadband Infrastructure Efforts* to inform stakeholders of the program's technical assistance offerings related to infrastructure projects. Click here to learn more.
- BroadbandUSA coordinated the Stronger Economies Together (SET) webinars series. These webinars were tailored for USDA Rural Development and University Extension training and technical assistance providers under the SET program. Trainers' instruction materials (including handouts) are available online at the following link http:// srdc.msstate.edu/set/coaching-teams/curriculum under "Supplemental Modules, Broadband."

Webinars

BroadbandUSA Practical Broadband Conversations Webinar Series

- **Topic:** Practical Broadband Conversations: Electric Co-ops Bringing Fiber to Rural America
- **Date:** Wednesday, November 15 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. EDT
- **Overview:** Electric cooperatives are capitalizing on existing infrastructure and deep community roots to bring gigabit communications to rural communities, and the results can be transformational. Just as rural electrification energized the country in the early 20th century, high capacity broadband connections are necessary for thriving communities in the 21st century. Join BroadbandUSA's Practical Broadband Conversations webinar to learn how member-based co-ops are making the case for investment and creating new opportunities for economic prosperity. Click here to register.
- **Speakers:**
  Brian Kilbourne, Policy Vice President and General Counsel, Utilities Technology Council
  Randy Klindt, Founder, Conexon; General Manager, OzarksGo
  Paul Belk, President, North Georgia Network

Events

NTIA Events

November 15, 2017
BroadbandUSA Practical Broadband Conversations: Electric Co-Ops Bringing Fiber to Rural America
BroadbandUSA will host the next webinar in its series. Click here to learn more.

Events of Interest

November 6, 2017
Nevada Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology Broadband Summit
The Broadband Summit will be held in Carson City, NV. BroadbandUSA's Doug Kinkoph will deliver a keynote speech. Click here to learn more.

November 7-9, 2017
Broadband Communities Economic Development Conference
Broadband Communities' Economic Development Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA. Click here to learn more.

November 15-20, 2017
National League of Cities (NLC) City Summit
NLC's City Summit will be held in Charlotte, NC. BroadbandUSA is exhibiting and speaking at the ITC Committee meeting. Click here to learn more.

Policy Corner

NTIA will convene a virtual meeting of a multistakeholder process on Internet of Things Security Upgradability and Patching on November 8, 2017. The virtual meeting will be held on November 8, 2017, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Eastern Time. For more information, the notice is available here.

Contact Us

If you are interested in receiving technical assistance, email broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov or call 202-482-2048. For more information, visit our website at www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa

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